



City of Bellingham

Keep Washington Working Act Work Group Meeting Minutes

March 19, 2026, 5:30 PM

Board Members Present:

Rebecca Agiewich

Eamon Bollinger

Catalina Hope

Holly Pai

Scott Powell

Abigail Senuty

Board Members Absent:

Ian Garconnette

Krystal Rodriguez

Ex-officio Members Present:

Deborah Bineza, Strategic Initiatives Manager
for Equity and Belonging

Justin Rasmussen, WhatComm Deputy
Director

Hannah Stone, City Council President

City of Bellingham Staff, Officials, and Others Present:

Ty Elmendorf, Bellingham Deputy Police
Chief

Janice Keller, Deputy City Administrator

Paul Knox, Facilitator and Chair

Kim Lund, Mayor

Jackie Weller, Legislative Office Manager

Paul Knox called the meeting to order at 5:33 p.m.

Welcome and agenda review / approval

A work group member requested adding discussion of policy development and the connection to CJTC processes. Staff confirmed time would be reserved during report-outs.

Hannah Stone provided brief observations from an event hosted by the Whatcom Racial Equity Commission in Ferndale. Work group members noted contrast between jurisdictions and expressed appreciation for City leadership's support of KWW-aligned practices.

Interim work team report outs

Federal contact data group:

The subgroup went over their updated recommendations document. Work group members and staff discussed whether the format of this document should be carried through to the rest of the final report.

Work group members discussed the subgroup's recommendations, with a focus on the third recommendation of the document, which states "Provide and report on the rationale and protocols for ongoing interagency communications with DHS, enforcement, and public messaging about criminal offenses and public safety emergencies." Discussion about this item included:

- Acknowledgment that it will be a big ask, as the current federal contact data does not include information about ongoing inter-agency communication
- How the information would be provided, whether included in the federal contact data or by

a different means

- There was not a clear answer to this, but the group can still include it as a recommendation and leave it up to the City to determine the best way to disseminate the information.
- If reporting on task force meetings is included, how much detail can and should be included. Deputy Chief Elmendorf pointed out that those meetings are often regarding ongoing investigations and are therefore not able to be disclosed in much detail. Members agreed ensuring the public understands that federal task force meetings occur and broadly what they cover would be helpful.
- The (now-repealed) ordinance that instituted the federal contact data collection stated that all contact between City employees and federal agencies be documented. However, there is currently no available information or justification about these task forces and some other contact.

The group also discussed item number four, which defines recommended procedures for audits of the federal contact data. Discussion around this item included:

- Auditing all the data is not viable – what portion of the contact data should be audited.
- What information should an audit include.
- Deputy Chief Elmendorf stated that he and Deputy Chief Hart are responsible for auditing the information before it is even entered into the database to make sure it is complete, but there is not a written record of that.

Work group members agreed that this set of recommendations should move forward.

Training group:

The group met with Deputy Chiefs Hart and Elmendorf recently to learn more about how policy and training fit together. They are working on synthesizing and formalizing their recommendations, but shared the following points that will be included:

- Explore a scenario-based learning strategy for KWW compliance. Experiential, active learning is more effective than passive reading.
- Interest in “teach-back” approaches where trainees explain concepts to demonstrate mastery.
- Anticipated release of statewide curriculum referenced by the Attorney General’s Office; subgroup recommends adopting and annualizing it when available.
- Difference between BPD and What-Comm training and difference between policy and training can be hard to parse through. Subgroup members have found it challenging to know what to recommend that is meaningful and realistic to implement.

Complaint and commendation process review group:

Work group members stated that initial recommendations were provided at the previous meeting; no new updates since then. Further discussion included:

- Commendation process – the group has only reviewed the complaint process, but stated they will try to take a look at the commendation process before the next meeting.
- What happens after the complaint is submitted?
- Should this set of recommendations be linked directly to immigration-related policies in the report?
- Complaints regarding departments other than BPD should be included.

- Possibility of including a statement on the website asking people to come forward if they witness activity that is not compliant with KWW.

Other recommendations:

Paul asked if there were other recommendations that don't fit into the sub-group categories. Ideas discussed included:

- In their presentation, the Attorney General's Office mentioned City contracts with vendors, such as pay-by-phone parking apps. Questions remain on who has access to that data and if the KWW provisions extend to those vendors. Flock cameras were also brought up.
 - The Mayor and Deputy Chief Elmendorf confirmed that the City does not utilize Flock cameras, but some private businesses do.
 - They also state that parking enforcement does use an automated license plate reader (ALPR) software, but the data is not shared and is typically only kept for a matter of hours.
 - Group members suggested that the City should publicize the fact that they do not use Flock.
 - The cameras downtown do not use ALPR software or facial recognition. The footage from these is not shared and is low quality.
 - Parking meter data is not stored unless there's a violation that will be heard in court.
- Courts Open to All Act (COTA) – Paul asked members to think about if they want to include anything about this act in their report.
- Revisited a conversation that occurred in an earlier meeting about officer-initiated stops and the possibility of storing information in the dispatch system at the initiation of the call so that race data would be included. This may be out of scope of the work group.

Review draft recommendations Council memo

Paul facilitated discussion on structure and content of the draft memo. Themes included:

- Whether all stated purposes of the work group have been fully addressed, for example review of the use of the word "citizen" in City communications.
 - Deborah stated that this was addressed early on. The City has already done work to correct that language on the website and other places.
- One member said they generally liked the inclusion of background statements.
- Language access policy – this was included in the list of things the group should address and they have not as of yet.
 - Janice reminded the group that language access was addressed in early presentations by BPD and What-Comm, but acknowledged they hadn't addressed it in a city-wide context.
 - The City does have a large ongoing language access project that will be presented to Council soon.
 - The work group will not have time to review the language access policy or practices before the report is due.
 - There could be a recommendation that the City continues to take language access into account with regards to their communications with the public.
- Items to include as appendices, including:

- The ACLU's cease and desist letter.
- The City's response to that cease and desist.
- A full year's worth of federal contact data.
- Format of the report, including:
 - Should the body of the report simply include recommendations with other information, such as background, limitations, etc., be included as appendices? Or should each section include that additional information?
 - Members agreed that background statements should be included for each section, but could be shorter than what was written by the sub-group looking at federal contact data.
 - Process and meeting summaries sections could be slimmed down and more detailed info could be an appendix.
 - Meeting minutes could be linked instead of including summaries of meetings.
 - Accessible language – Janice spoke to the staff's recommendation that each section be written in plain language so that they are more accessible and easier to translate. Some sections will contain proposed edits to meet that goal, though the content will not be changed.

Next meeting reminder and approve January and February minutes

Janice presented the current timeline for wrapping up the group's work and a proposed new timeline, which would add a meeting at the end of the April. This would give members more time to revise and send in content and give staff more time to write the report. Members agreed that the new timeline was best. The new timeline also anticipates the work group presenting recommendations to the City Council at the Council's May 18, 2026 meeting.

One member reported that they had done write up of issues related to the pending CJTC process and has recommendations. Existing BPD policy 417 has redundancies and is long and complex. Would like to recommend review for readability. Members discussed what the write up will be referring to, content, history, and certification from CJTC

Holly Pai moved to approve the January and February minutes. Eamon Bollinger seconded the motion.

Motion passed with none opposed.

One member asked about signage recently posted near the municipal courthouse that state that these areas are not to be used for immigration enforcement or staging. Staff spoke to the intention behind the signs and the City's ability to enforce. Reports of detainments and/or violations of COTA are sent to AGO's office, which helps build their body of evidence if they are to take an action.

Mayor Lund expressed appreciation for members' willingness to interface with BPD and other City departments.

The meeting adjourned at 7:38 p.m.